

I AM NAVY MEDICINE: LT. ANDREA FLUKE, NAVAL HEALTH CLINIC CORPUS CHRISTI, INTEGRATED MEDICAL SERVICE TEAM



Lt. Andrea Fluke, Naval Health Clinic Corpus Christi, Integrated Medical Service Team, discusses positive attitudes towards diabetes management. Her team hosts a weekly class for patients, Continuing Your Journey with Diabetes. (U.S. Navy photo/RELEASED)

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (Aug. 9, 2017) Following graduation from Mount Saint Mary's Catholic High School in my hometown of Oklahoma City, I got a scholarship to Newman University in Wichita, Kansas where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Nursing in May 2011.

Toward the end of nursing school I began considering a commission in the U.S. Navy because I wanted to experience life outside of Oklahoma, but more importantly, my dad and sister inspired me to serve in Navy Medicine. He had been a Navy hospital corpsman for five years, and she is currently in the Navy's General Surgery Residency Program at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

"Going Navy" was an easy decision because of their inspiration. I felt like I had a greater calling serving military members and their families than working in civilian health care. So I raised my right hand, taking the commissioning oath in November 2011, and then reported to my first duty station in February 2012.

Naval Medical Center San Diego was a bit intimidating at first, because of its large patient and staff population. At that point in my career I wanted to work with kids, but instead I was assigned to work inpatient on a medical surgical ward, building my skills as a new Navy nurse. Later, while I was still stationed in San Diego, I got to work in the pediatric ward.

My follow-on orders were to Naval Health Clinic Corpus Christi (NHCCC), Texas. I embraced this assignment because it was a smaller command with a more familiar setting, and much closer to "home!"

At Naval Health Corps Christi, I have learned the basics of ambulatory care and have begun covering for various clinic managers such as behavioral health, operational medicine, and Medical Home Port. I was also selected to lead a newly formed group called the Integrated Medical Service Team (IMST). It consists of a dietitian, clinical pharmacist, disease manager, and behavioral health consultant. This team implemented diabetes classes into the clinic, as well as a diabetes support group for the first time. We serve a large population of retirees and dependents who are either pre-diabetic or diabetic.

My mother is diabetic so I am passionate about diabetes prevention. To that end, I authored an article that was published in Navy News and the base newspaper about diabetes and what NHCCC is doing to help its diabetic patients.

During my five and half years on active duty I have had the privilege to serve many of our patients, as well as take part on numerous team projects.

I can reflect on many proud Navy moments, but by far, having my older sister read my oath when I promoted from ensign to lieutenant junior grade; and at two weeks postpartum, being promoted to lieutenant while having my son, husband, and parents there, are truly the most memorable.

The Navy has been good to me. Only one percent wears this uniform and I did so willingly. It has been a privilege to care for our Sailors and their families. I travelled to places I never thought I would see; I became a wife and mother in the Navy, and have benefited from world-class health and dental care.

Naturally, there have been highs and lows. But we can expect that with any career. What is important is that we enjoy the high points. By contrast, it is equally essential to keep pushing through the low points, remembering to always embrace the opportunity to learn and grow, in my case, as a nurse and naval officer.

I'm Lt. Andrea Fluke and I am Navy Medicine.